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INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0451
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHXX/GENEVA IO MISSIONS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0513
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0435
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0289
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0303
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0374
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0175
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 1905

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 DILI 000268

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS
NSC FOR HOLLY MORROW
USPACOM FOR JOC AND POLAD
JOINT STAFF FOR J5

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/28/2016
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [TT](#)
SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR SITREP FOR MAY 26, 2006

REF: Dili 263

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CLASSIFIED BY: Grover Joseph Rees, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy
Dili, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)
NOTE: THIS CABLE DUPLICATES A CABLE THAT WAS SENT YESTERDAY, MAY
26, AND AGAIN THIS MORNING, MAY 27. IT IS BEING RE-SENT BECAUSE
THE ORIGINAL CABLE HAS NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED BY EMBASSY DILI.

11. (U) SUMMARY

-- AUSTRALIAN PATROLS COMMENCE, SOME VIOLENCE CONTINUES
-- GOVERNMENT DEFIES PRESIDENT
-- PRESIDENT INTENDS TO DISMISS THE GOVERNMENT
-- FOREIGN MINISTER: PRIME MINISTER SHOULD RESIGN
-- SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IMPROVES BUT REMAINS TENSE
-- NATIONAL HOSPITAL STRUGGLING TO CARE FOR WOUNDED
-- MINIMAL POLICE PRESENCE
-- UNOTIL MAY EVACUATE NON-ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES
-- INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs) OVERWHELM CAMPS
-- AMERICAN CITIZEN UPDATE
End summary.

AUSTRALIAN PATROLS COMMENCE, SOME VIOLENCE CONTINUES

12. (SBU) The Australian Defense Force (ADF) has secured the
airport, national police (PNTL) headquarters, and UN
headquarters, and have commenced limited foot patrols in Dili.
More substantial patrols will commence tomorrow after ADF's
vehicles and armor arrive. The ADF intends to establish its
force in Tasitolu, the current headquarters of the Timorese
military (FDTL). Despite the patrols, some violent attacks ---
often perpetrated by FDTL members and/or by civilians wearing
FDTL uniforms and armed with FDTL weapons --- continue today in
Dili's outskirts.

GOVERNMENT DEFIES PRESIDENT, MAINTAINS CONTROL OF THE MILITARY,
AND MAY DISHONOR AGREEMENT WITH AUSTRALIA

13. (C) A meeting today at FDTL's Military Police headquarters with Defense Minister Roque Rodrigues confirmed that the government remains in control of the military, despite the President's declaration that he had taken control of them. FDTL and/or the Prime Minister may also intend to resist implementing the agreement with the Government of Australia(GOA), which according to GOA sources and to Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta specifies that FDTL will withdraw from Dili. During the meeting with Emboffs, Rodrigues emphasized that he appreciated the Australians' assistance but that he did not think it was necessary, because FDTL has already "secured" Dili. Even so, he said, the military is coordinating its actions with the Australian Defense Forces and had identified several areas where the Australians should patrol, including the port and a power station.

14. (C) FDTL will eventually relocate its Tasitolu headquarters to Hera to make room for the Australians, he said, but "it won't be tomorrow" because the FDTL still needs to concentrate on maintaining security. FDTL also intends to relocate its other Dili-based operations to Hera as well, including the MP and logistics operations, but that it was impossible to do so in the current environment because the Australians were not yet able to guarantee the safety of the city or the security of the retreating soldiers.

15. (C) During the meeting Rodrigues received a call from the Prime Minister in which they briefly discussed the military situation - making it perfectly clear that the Prime Minister remains in charge of military operations. Later in the day the Prime Minister issued a press release stating that he remains in charge of the security forces and stating that FDTL would continue to patrol the perimeter of Dili as well as key Government officers, in "coordination" with the Australian forces.

16. (U) Contrary to numerous credible eyewitness reports, the Government's press release attributes yesterday's attack on unarmed police and UN officials to a single soldier who "has now been detained".

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PRESIDENT INTENDS TO DISMISS THE GOVERNMENT

17. (C) Several sources close to President Xanana Gusmao indicated that the President still intends to exercise his constitutional powers to dismiss the Prime Minister and possibly to dissolve the Parliament. However, these sources told the Ambassador today that the President will likely delay taking these actions for two to three weeks. This course of action appears to have been determined, in part at least, by the President's desire to avoid taking actions that might cause further confusion during the early days of the Australian intervention. Despite the President's firm intention to dismiss the Alkatiri Government --- with the apparent concurrence of Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta, the country's two Catholic Bishops, and the overwhelming majority of the Timorese people --- the likely effect of a delay will be to give Alkatiri time to consolidate his position and perhaps to erode the constitutional justification for dismissal of the government, which is that it must be "necessary to ensure the normal functioning of the democratic institutions."

FOREIGN MINISTER: PRIME MINISTER SHOULD RESIGN

18. (U) Foreign Minister Horta gave a speech at UN Headquarters (Obrigado barracks) this morning in which he essentially called for Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri to resign. In Portugal, said Horta, past governments have been dissolved for far less significant problems. Someone in the Government, he said, must take responsibility for the current crisis.

19. (C) Meanwhile, the Prime Minister stated that he has no intention of resigning so long as he has the support of the

party and that doing so would only deepen the crisis. Senior members of Fretilin close to the Prime Minister are reportedly trying to arrange a meeting of Central Committee members to discuss the current situation but have not been able to do so.

SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IMPROVES BUT REMAINS TENSE

¶10. (U) Attacks and violence in Dili continue, particularly in the areas surrounding Becora and the southern outskirts of town. Sources at UNOTIL headquarters report that they heard sporadic gunfire throughout the day and there were clashes in the hills to Dili's south and southeast. There was also an apparent attack on UNOTIL headquarters by at least eight armed men in FDTL uniforms, some of whom reportedly managed to enter a UNOTIL-controlled area adjacent to the main UN compound in an apparent search for PNTL who had taken refuge there. UN staff heard gunfire at close range during this assault, but none saw who fired the shots.

¶11. (U) The road between the Embassy and the airport is clear, but gangs of youth armed with guns, machetes, and slingshots are active in many neighborhoods and market areas. By nightfall, these gangs controlled several large neighborhoods, including some near the city center. Many communities have organized their own self-defense forces to protect themselves from the gangs.

¶12. (SBU) Despite continued threats and intimidation by gangs and by elements of FDTL, there appears to have been a reduction in community violence compared to yesterday. This view was confirmed by emergency room staff at the national hospital who report that the number of patients they treated today was much lower than yesterday and that in general the wounds were less severe. They also said that some of today's most serious cases were people injured in yesterday's violence but who were too frightened to see medical treatment. There continue to be reports of civilians caught in firefights over the last few days. One of the priests running an IDP camp was shot in the shoulder yesterday when he traveled to the hospital to deliver last rites, but he is reported to be recovering.

NATIONAL HOSPITAL STRUGGLING TO CARE FOR WOUNDED

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¶13. (U) The national hospital continues to struggle to treat the wounded. The hospital is now treating patients from both the police and military. Earlier in the day the hospital was very tense after a military patrol entered the hospital. Some members of the patrol reportedly told hospital staff that they were looking for a particular severely wounded police officer, and hospital staff expressed fear of a massacre of wounded police. Many patients were terrified. Embassy staff witnessed patients who physically trembled and sobbed at the sight of military personnel, and several patients, including some who were severely wounded, asked to be released because they believed it was more dangerous in the hospital than out in hiding, even with untreated wounds. However, as of late afternoon the environment at the hospital appeared to have improved. Military patrols were no longer present and the co-location of injured military and police (PNTL) within the hospital no longer appeared to be a source of concern.

¶14. (U) Bodies continue to pile up outside the hospital as the morgue has extremely limited capacity. Several bodies, including one of a uniformed soldier, are lying on the ground outside because there is no more room inside.

MINIMAL POLICE PRESENCE

¶15. (C) The national police service (PNTL) has virtually ceased to function as an organization, due in large part to yesterday's systematic attacks by FDTL on PNTL facilities and personnel. See Reftel. Approximately 50 police officers are currently taking refuge in the UN compound because of the threat of further attacks by the military. More police officers arrive regularly; after the attack described in paragraph 10 the UN

evacuated at least 50 PNTL members to the airport where they can be protected by Australian forces. Members of the elite police Rapid Intervention Unit are afraid to depart their compound for fear that they will be attacked by the military. Emboff successfully located the supervisor of the PNTL armory, took him to PNTL headquarters, and was able to confirm that the police weapons stocks had not been looted.

¶16. (C) Emboffs today spoke with both Deputy Police Commissioner Ismael Babo and the head of the Police Reserve Unit (URP), Apolinario. Both have relocated to the Aileu PNTL headquarters, not far from Major Reinado's original base, and are presumed to have joined the dissident military group. A UN source indicated that Babo and Apolinario may be sheltering Major Reinado at the headquarters.

UNOTIL MAY EVACUATE NON-ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES

¶17. (SBU) UN staff were all consolidated at the UN compound last night and were told to remain there through the day. UN sources report that they are officially on evacuation status for non-essentials, but are not currently evacuating anyone. Many UN staff are still in shock over yesterday's attack on two United Nations police advisors (UNPOLs), although both injured UNPOLs are reported to be doing well.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs) OVERWHELM CAMPS

¶18. (SBU) Due to the recent violence, the number of IDPs has ballooned to around 50,000 within Dili. The Government is no longer able to respond to their needs and the Red Cross is only able to respond to injuries. International NGOs reported that they must conduct a complete survey of current needs, but have been severely constrained in their ability to do so by security concerns and reduced staffing due to evacuation of non-essential employees.

¶19. (U) Organizations operating IDP camps report that the sanitation and food situation is becoming critical because of over-crowding and the inability of aid organizations to re-supply the camps due to security concerns. Hostile youth

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groups have reportedly moved into the neighborhoods surrounding some of the camps. The United Nations and several Embassies were giving temporary refuge to their Timorese employees, employee family members, and some other Timorese.

AMERICAN CITIZEN UPDATE

¶20. (SBU) Emboffs continue to be in contact with as many Amcits as possible. All Amcits with whom we spoke to today report that they remain safe. About a dozen departed on today's commercial flight to Bali, and two on an Australian C130 to Darwin. A number are scheduled to fly out in the coming days. The current headcount of Amcits remaining in East Timor is 83.
REES